

So, what we have said is: Let's reduce their appellate jurisdiction to the circuit courts, and let's depoliticize judge selection processes. If the courts are going to say that a law that we passed is unconstitutional, we will select from a pool of circuit court judges, appellate court judges, at random, and it will take at least 70 percent of them to overturn a bill that we pass out of here.

It takes two-thirds for us to overturn a veto, right? Let's hold them to the same standard. Let's not make this political. Let's get enough people involved in the pool that you can't politicize this. Do it for the good of making this place work.

Also, it would eliminate the shadow docket. Why do we allow ourselves to continue to live in a world where the Supreme Court can just decide to rule on something and not even explain it? How do you work as a lawyer if you don't know that? Let's get rid of the shadow docket.

I am not perfect. You aren't perfect, Mr. Speaker. None of us in this room are perfect. Our Founders weren't perfect, but we are perfectible, and we have a job that affords us the opportunity and the responsibility to make our government a little bit better, a little bit more responsive, a little bit more democratic to move the baton forward.

I would submit that that is just an amazing privilege. I am grateful to have it. I am grateful to serve with all of my colleagues.

I hope I can get the support of this body and my colleagues to redouble our commitments to make our government better, to make sure that we honor Jefferson's promise to tune it and tweak it if it is not carrying out the majority will, and to pass that baton forward to whoever follows us up to be in a little better position than we had ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THREATS FACING CONSERVATIVE SPEECH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. BUCK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to discuss the threats facing conservative speech in this country. When members of government take it upon themselves to declare certain speech illegal or undesir-

able, they effectively silence opposition. This isn't the American way.

We have seen this kind of censorship in Saudi Arabia, Communist China, and Soviet Russia. We never want to see it in America.

Tonight, we are gathered to call attention to a shocking, coordinated attempt by progressives in business and government to suppress dissent, stifle debate, and threaten free speech.

Last week, one of the largest satellite TV providers, DIRECTV, chose to deplatform Newsmax from their lineup.

Newsmax is the fourth highest-rated cable news channel and is watched by more than 25 million Americans. This decision means that more than 13 million homes will lose access to Newsmax programming.

Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, Democratic members of the Energy and Commerce Committee wrote to AT&T and DIRECTV encouraging the censorship of One America News, FOX News, and Newsmax. Two years later, two out of three of those networks are now deplatformed.

One year ago, after pressure from Democrats, AT&T and DIRECTV removed the One America News Network from its programming, and now DIRECTV has removed Newsmax.

The Energy and Commerce Committee has immediate jurisdiction over the business interests of DIRECTV. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand why AT&T and DIRECTV felt pressured to comply with committee demands.

Simply put, Democrats in that committee disagreed with the content coming out of One America News Network and Newsmax and decided they wanted them canceled.

This is a clear case of free speech infringement and viewpoint discrimination. Government colluding with telecommunications giants should chill us all.

We are facing a concerted, unabashed effort to shrink the limits of debate by corporations in an unholy alliance with political activists and their government avatars. These companies have become willing prosecutors of dissent.

Woke corporations are actively interposing themselves between Americans and the conversations they need to have. Why? Because they are afraid, afraid that the lessons they learned in progressive universities won't stand up to objective scrutiny; afraid that vigorous debate breeds societies of citizens, not sheep; above all, afraid that if they cannot anoint themselves enlightened arbiters, their ideas will just have to stand on their own merits like the rest of us.

I urge my colleagues across the aisle to rethink their desire to silence opposition. The people who want to silence opponents are people who can't win debates.

I urge American businesses to stiffen their spines and stand up in favor of free speech and open speech.

We acknowledge that we may never know the exact mindset of the deci-

sionmakers who decided to join hand in glove with progressives' drive to silence their opposition, but what we know is more than enough.

Democrats asked, and DIRECTV delivered. Progressives spoke up, and One America News was silenced. Newsmax is now on the chopping block.

Where does that leave us? Under the lengthening shadow of censorship or at the beginning of a new era when freedom fights back.

I know what side I will be on. Which one will you join?

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BISHOP), my colleague from the Tar Heel State.

Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Colorado and my colleagues will show in this hour that censorship of conservative voices proliferates among social media and other tech companies, banks and other commercial service providers, and massive public companies and capital markets pursuing ESG policies.

As Mr. BUCK suggested, it is worse than that because the leading and most insidious censors, whose predominant selection of conservatives to victimize, by the way, as only an aside, are the powerful and secretive agencies of Federal law enforcement and the so-called intelligence community.

□ 1830

In only the most recent example of this egregious wrongdoing, and solely due to the commendable voluntary disclosure by a social media company of the Twitter files, we now know that not only the FBI but also the ODNI, NSA, and CIA audaciously abused their power to coordinate Big Tech and Big Media to suppress from circulation information that was highly significant to the 2020 Presidential election; namely, the New York Post's Hunter Biden laptop story.

But even this jaw-dropping disclosure focusing on an isolated document brings home just how insidious, how brazen the conduct of these massive and unaccountable agencies has become.

Here is one. Twitter files Number 7, Tweet 15, by one of the reporters with integrity, Michael Shellenberger: My colleagues at the Fort had a query for you. This is from Elvis Chan at the FBI to Yoel Roth at Twitter.

My colleagues at the Fort is a reference to Fort Meade, the headquarters of the National Security Agency. He says that Twitter no longer provides their data feed, as they had in earlier years apparently, and asked if they would be willing to change it.

Their data feed; comments, postings of 77 million Americans and more than 330 million people worldwide.

My colleagues, Mr. Chan says, are currently contracting with a vendor for an analytic tool for open-source intelligence. The commercial version of this tool includes the Twitter data feed. However, the feed was disabled because

the vendor said they did not want to violate their terms of service with Twitter.

My colleagues are wondering if Twitter would be open to revising its terms of service to allow this vendor to continue having access to the Twitter feed.

This representative of the FBI is asking for Twitter to reverse its policy to allow government agencies to conduct analytics on the discourse of the American people; mass surveillance of the public conversation; collection and preservation, so it can be searched at will by government bureaucrats for whatever purposes.

And note, he makes reference to the provision of this, not to the FBI, but "to members of the IC," the intelligence community.

Bad enough if this were the FBI, but he is talking about the agencies who are supposed to direct their attention abroad for the sake of American security and, instead, they are seeking mass surveillance on Americans' utterances and those of unsuspecting people the world over.

A good Democrat, William Proxmire said, power always has to be kept in check. Power exercised in secret, especially under the cloak of national security, is doubly dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, in the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government, we will plumb the depths of powerful agencies gone rogue; and then this Congress must act to keep in check power exercised in secret.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona, the Grand Canyon State (Mr. BIGGS), America's favorite Arizona podcaster.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for organizing this.

In years past, I would imagine that this particular issue would draw people from both sides of the aisle to come and protest the marriage of Big Business, Big Tech, and Big Government, to silence dissenting voices in this, what once was the freest Nation in the history of the world.

Censorship is an authoritarian tool used to keep power by suppressing dissent. It is done, in our case, under the myth of keeping Americans safe. Conservatives, though, are playing against a stacked deck. This administration is doing the stacking.

Last year, for instance, the Department of Homeland Security attempted to establish the Orwellian disinformation governance board, ultimately having to walk that back but, in reality, they just gave it another name and they will continue to try to suppress conservative voices.

We learned months later that Facebook implemented a special portal where government officials can request the censorship of specific posts.

Ahead of the 2020 election, unelected, deep state bureaucrats coordinated with major social media companies to ensure that the contents of Hunter

Biden's laptop would be suppressed, right before an election.

Users could not even share a link to the New York Post story to read the report for themselves, and Twitter even locked the New York Post's account and others for simply sharing the report.

Facebook spied on individuals' private messages and reported users to the FBI if they questioned the 2020 election.

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and others removed a sitting United States President from their platforms. Meanwhile, Twitter allowed Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to tweet horrific messages and tweets, without so much as deleting the tweets.

And we wonder, we wonder, why Americans feel threatened by their own government, and why polling consistently tells us that our governmental institutions are viewed with disrepute by the American people.

The moderators of these platforms have put their thumb on the scale of debate and have targeted conservatives over and over. But censorship does not just occur online, it can occur in the chilling of speech and the removal of debate altogether. We see that on college campuses, where students are fearful of retaliation if they express a conservative viewpoint.

We have seen this administration target concerned parents attending school board meetings to protect their First Amendment activity by likening them to domestic terrorists.

Recently, we have watched as Democrats, instead of promoting free speech, wrote a letter demanding that AT&T, that Alphabet, Hulu, Apple, Comcast, Roku, et cetera, remove three conservative media outlets from their programming. They have taken down OAN, and they have now notified Newsmax they are going to take them down.

We know what happens in nations where you have the Big Government utilizing the power of the marketplace through Big Business, and now the marriage of Big Tech. We know that that leads to something that I call fascism. That is what we see happening in this once and, hopefully, future great Nation today.

The idea, "... that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours."

That statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association.

I am suggesting that we have the courage to allow free speech, free thought, free debate in this great Nation.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, it is now my honor to yield to the gentleman from South Carolina, the Palmetto State, one of Biden's many vacation spots (Mr. NORMAN).

Mr. NORMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and I appreciate him for putting this together.

Mr. Speaker, as citizens of the United States of America, we are privileged to have a constitutional right of free speech. This right entitles us to the ability to speak, but not the right to be heard.

Favoring liberal voices over conservative ones, while pretending to be neutral, is both hypocritical and profoundly unfair. However, no law compels private companies to be fair and evenhanded arbiters of information.

Censorship of conservatives online and by Big Tech has become a commonly used mechanism by the left to silence conservatives. Silencing people because you simply disagree with them dangerously infringes on the rights of free speech as protected in the First Amendment of our Constitution.

When I learned that DIRECTV dropped Newsmax from its channels, I was outraged. Newsmax is the fourth highest-rated cable news channel and is watched by 25 million Americans.

Everyone should be allowed to choose what news outlets they want to hear from, especially with the dominance of the democratic media. I frequently reach a wide audience of my constituency to communicate the ongoings of Congress and can personally speak to how large the audience is based on the feedback I receive from my constituents in South Carolina's Fifth District and from other States.

I am glad that House Republicans will hold hearings on this matter to get to the bottom of the blatant censorship of conservative views so that we will know, once and for all, if DIRECTV has been selectively targeting Newsmax.

DIRECTV should be held accountable for its actions, and I fully stand behind conservatives having their voices heard.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN), the best dentist in Texas.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, not many have tasted true freedom like Americans have because, in all of the world, there is no place like the United States of America.

But if we are not careful, this unique experiment that has persevered through depression, famine, sickness, terrorism, world wars, and a civil war will disappear before our very eyes.

The French philosopher Montesquieu wrote that "the deterioration of every government begins with the decay of the principles upon which it was founded." This statement is as true today as it was in 1748.

Right now, we are literally witnessing the decay of our freedoms of speech. For years, we have watched one political party silence and discredit those they disagree with by deplatforming them, censoring them, shadow-banning them, and suppressing their ability to reach the public.

We have seen this tactic used against duly elected Members of Congress, professionals in countless fields, conservative media outlets like Newsmax and OAN, and even a sitting President.

The endless kowtowing to a political faction with an agenda so radical that you either have to bend the knee or be exiled goes against the very fabric of our Constitution. It is un-American, and it is a disgrace.

The left treats debate or, God forbid, even a simple difference of thought, as public enemy number one. Why is our freedom of speech so threatening to the democratic narrative?

We cannot stand idle while our freedoms are being extinguished. As President Reagan said, "freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction."

I don't want my 17 grandchildren to spend their sunset years telling their children and their children's children what it was once like in the United States, when men and women were free.

We must ensure that America remains that beacon of hope, the city on a hill, a nation with a dream that anyone can grasp if they only have the courage to dare.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia, the Old Dominion State, the State for Lovers (Mr. GOOD).

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership, his continued leadership on this subject.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring awareness, more awareness to the continued censorship of conservative voices.

Leftist bias and discrimination continues to threaten a diversity of thoughts and viewpoints being represented in the public arena. It is not hard to find examples of conservative voices being silenced.

In fact, we know that Democrats and the White House have been colluding with private companies in recent years to censor and eliminate conservative voices.

In fact, back in February of 2021, Democrats on the Energy and Commerce Committee went so far as to write and ask AT&T's DIRECTV to censor OAN, FOX News Channel, and Newsmax. Then, in January of 2022, AT&T-owned DIRECTV complied and dropped OAN from their platform and their channel lineup.

Now they are planning to do the same thing with Newsmax, the fourth highest-rated cable news channel, or the fourth most popular one, and a top-20 cable channel overall.

Meanwhile, DIRECTV carries 10 to 12 liberal news channels with a much lesser audience, and actually pays them to be on their platform.

It is wrong for DIRECTV to make nonbusiness decisions for ideological reasons that are in direct conflict with the interests of their customers, their employees, and their shareholders.

Worse yet, it is wrong for DIRECTV to utilize their business to suppress conservative voices by infringing on the constitutional freedoms of speech and the freedom of the press because

Newsmax is actually a media company that is trying hard to hold government accountable.

Why else would DIRECTV drop one of their most popular channels?

□ 1845

DIRECTV's actions are just another example of Big Tech and big media being leveraged to discriminate against conservative voices.

Whatever happened to classic liberalism where we allowed a variety of viewpoints to be heard and let people think for themselves?

Republicans must conduct appropriate oversight to determine the degree to which Democrats in Congress and the White House are colluding with media companies to suppress First Amendment freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. VAN DREW).

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. BUCK for doing this and putting this together.

Blatant attacks on conservative speech are truly nothing new. First, the left and Big Tech removed a sitting President from social media platforms. Imagine that: a sitting President removed.

Then Big Tech companies deemed conservative views on COVID "misinformation" and removed sitting Members of Congress from Twitter. Then these same Big Tech companies deemed the Hunter Biden story "misinformation" and wiped any mention of it from their platforms.

Yet, Democrats can freely post that former President Trump was involved in Russian collusion, despite that being proven a lie. Democrats in Congress can tweet anti-Semitic rhetoric with no repercussions from Big Tech or even their own party. It is unbelievable.

When an outsider of politics came in and took over Twitter, thank God, Democrats knew they were in a little bit of trouble. They did everything possible to stop the overhaul of the platform, which desperately needed to be done. It is because they knew our government was involved in censoring Americans, censoring American free speech.

Our First Amendment is unequivocally the most important right afforded to us, the most important right given to us, from our forefathers. It is a blessing from God.

We teach our children to have a voice. We teach them to stand up for what they believe in. Yet, this trend being perpetuated by the left that differing viewpoints should be censored cannot stand.

With DIRECTV making the decision to remove Newsmax, it is essentially depriving millions of Americans from hearing directly from their Representatives. It is definitely censorship, and it is departing from our Nation's, from America's, core principles.

That is why I am standing here. I am standing here, and I am fighting here for Newsmax on DIRECTV.

It is not just about Newsmax. It is about Americans' right to freedom of speech. We cannot lose the America, the America that we know and the America that we love, but we are so painfully close to losing it in so many ways, and this being the most important way.

We cannot allow the silencing of views. We must foster and encourage debate in this great country. Everybody should be at the table. All the issues should be discussed and hammered out.

Whether you are a Democrat, a Republican, or an independent, everyone deserves a voice. Everyone deserves to be heard. This is America. Everyone deserves to exercise their First Amendment right without any interference, without interference from big companies, without interference from Big Tech, without interference from government. That is what our Founders intended. That is what America is about. We have the responsibility to stand up and fight for and love that America.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman who has been described as New Jersey's best dentist.

Now, we are going to Arizona's best dentist.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR).

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Speaker, censorship in America is a major problem. Congress cannot continue to deputize Big Tech to censor competition and lawful political speech.

Reforming section 230 of the Communications Decency Act is critical. That is why I have sponsored Stop the Censorship Act: to empower users with their editorial control, not government or Big Tech.

Making it worse, Big Government has colluded with Big Tech to censor American citizens and to influence elections, which is a clear and illegal violation of the Hatch Act and First Amendment. Now, we have AT&T's DIRECTV deplatforming Newsmax. It is all unacceptable.

Corrupt corporations and bureaucrats must be held accountable. We will utilize the Holman rule and all tools at our disposal in Congress.

Looking back even 10 years, it was difficult to predict the totalitarian instincts that Big Tech and fake news media now promote.

Our country was literally founded on free speech and other civil liberties. Today, the fragile Big Tech hipsters are afraid of ideas. They are afraid of open discussion. They cannot fathom how to issue a counterpoint to anyone or an idea they don't like.

Censorship is un-American. It is uncivil. It is a recipe for discontent and authoritarianism. An enforced contract between the subscriber and user protects free speech.

I thank the Congressman from Colorado for hosting this Special Order on this important issue, and I look forward to our investigations and to our reforms.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CLOUD).

Mr. CLOUD. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. BUCK for his leadership on this and thank him for bringing us together for this important conversation.

The First Amendment recognizes what we understand to be a God-given right, the right to freedom of speech and the right to free press.

Tragically, Americans have seen their government conspire against them recently. We have seen parents targeted at school board meetings. We have seen pro-life activists brought under light by the strong hand of their government.

Too many times, American companies have joined in this effort. We have seen once-great American companies become the enforcement arm of a radical, woke, left agenda. They have enforced and become the authoritarian enforcement for this effort. But Americans are aware of what is happening.

Too many times, we have seen them go after people who voiced concerns over COVID lockdowns and vaccines on social media. Now, they are going after news channels that air stories that they disagree with.

Last year, several Members on the other side of this aisle sent letters to several cable and satellite providers, including DIRECTV, demanding that they stop showing OAN, Newsmax, and Fox. In recent weeks, we have seen AT&T's DIRECTV cave to the Democrats' anti-American and Marxist demands by demonetizing Newsmax and OAN.

Many Americans are concerned. They realize that their government's suppression of speech is the mark of totalitarianism. We are committed to pushing back on this administration's attempt to silence and suppress the American people.

To those on the left, I would simply ask this: If you have to work this hard, if you have to use censorship, coercion, and suppression for your ideas to gain any traction, maybe you have bad ideas.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY), a marine mom.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank all my colleagues, but unfortunately, this isn't a bipartisan group.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with deep concern about the state of free and diverse speech in American public life.

DIRECTV, as part of the extreme negotiation tactic, deplatformed Newsmax and silenced their unique perspective for over 13 million DIRECTV subscribers.

This negotiation tactic is a clear example of political bias against conservative news outlets like Newsmax, and it is having a chilling effect on free speech and freedom of the press.

Media outlets enjoy certain privileges as members of the fourth estate. Limiting free speech based on political views is against the spirit of the First Amendment and contrary to a country

that celebrates and encourages the marketplace of ideas.

As a former newspaper owner and publisher, I know what it means to represent all viewpoints in the media and to revere that marketplace of ideas. DIRECTV has a responsibility to reassure its customers and the American people that it is not silencing Newsmax for political reasons.

I ask, and all of us are asking, that DIRECTV immediately come to the negotiation table with Newsmax and end this disruption of access rooted in political bias.

Mr. Speaker, I thank, again, my colleagues and everyone standing up for this. I just hope that everyone on both sides of the aisle, with all viewpoints, would stand up and fight on behalf of all of us who are now not getting a robust debate as promised by the spirit of our Founders.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEUSER), whose district borders the sweetest place on Earth, Hershey Park.

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend, Mr. BUCK, for his leadership on this issue. This is quite a somewhat disturbing issue, I think, to all of us, Republicans and Democrats.

For the last 2 years, Americans have often been led to believe that anything they see and hear that does not comport with the stance of the Biden administration is somehow "misinformation," whether it is criticism of COVID mandates, the fact that our border is not secure, or the authenticity of Hunter Biden's laptop.

Thanks to the Twitter files, we know that social media companies actively exploited their ideology and suppressed speech with which they disagreed. Nice, in America.

Two years ago, two of our Democrat colleagues sent letters to every cable and satellite provider calling conservative news channels FOX News, Newsmax, and One America News purveyors of disinformation and asked specifically: "Are you planning to carry FOX News, Newsmax, both now and beyond any contract renewal date? If so, why?"

Last year, DIRECTV announced that it was deplatforming One America News and just last week they deplatformed Newsmax.

Over a million DIRECTV subscribers in Pennsylvania, hundreds of thousands in my district, no longer have access to Newsmax through their TV. Dozens and dozens of my constituents have written or called my office to voice their concern and anger about DIRECTV's actions to deplatform Newsmax. This is unacceptable.

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability will be, I very much hope and will be supporting, investigating private companies that have circumvented the First Amendment for ideological purposes, and this investigation should not be limited to social media platforms alone.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. OWENS), my good friend and a Super Bowl champion.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, KEN BUCK, a leading voice on demanding accountability from Big Tech and big media, for bringing us together tonight.

I am here to speak against the censorship of conservative outlets by AT&T and DIRECTV.

On April 16, 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., was confined in a Birmingham, Alabama, jail. His crime? Fighting Jim Crow segregation and showing the injustice to the American people through peaceful, nonviolent protest.

He shared his thoughts through a letter titled: "Letter from Birmingham Jail." He gave millions of Americans the opportunity to read the thoughts of reason and one of faith in the Judeo-Christian values upon which our Nation was founded. Dr. King was someone who believed in the innate goodness of American's justice-seeking heart.

He stated in that letter: "Injustice anywhere in this country is injustice everywhere."

We see injustice in the canceling of conservative voices by board members and executives who cowardly hide in secret behind closed doors, using the power granted to them through the corporate name built by other American-loving business leaders. AT&T and DIRECTV have in the last 2 years deplatformed two very prominent and successful conservative platforms, OAN and Newsmax.

The cancel culture is driven by the insecure, the weak, and the intellectually lazy who work in the shadows to control the American heart. This is because they feel inept and unable through meritocracy to compete and change the American heart.

We are standing in Congress today to fight against injustice. It is an injustice that literally threatens our freedom. The power brokers of the early 1900s focused on controlling the marketplace of property, wealth, and industry. Today's power brokers are focused on controlling the marketplace of thoughts, ideas, and communication. In doing so, they steal the American people's opportunity for unity.

□ 1900

There will never be American unity without the freedom of speech, to be heard, and our thoughts to be judged by one another.

Ignorant and free can never be. Those who seek to keep us ignorant, regardless of how powerful and popular they are, are not the friends of freedom. They are not friends of the American way.

I call on all Americans to join us in this fight against censorship and preserve our freedom.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I recognize the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Ms.

HAGEMAN), my neighbor to the north from the Yellowstone State.

Ms. HAGEMAN. Mr. Speaker, in today's America, conservatives are constantly under attack. Attempts to silence us take many forms and are perpetuated by numerous people, agencies, and corporations.

Conservatives are more often audited by the IRS, and conservative organizations are more often denied tax-exempt status than are liberals. This is an indisputable fact and has been happening at least since the Obama administration. This is, in part, the reason why voting to stop the hiring of 87,000 new IRS agents was so critical.

Conservatives are more often investigated and harassed by the Department of Justice than are liberals. The DOJ has even gone so far as to seize the cell phone of a sitting Congressman. It has raided residents of conservatives, while ignoring liberals whose actions are far worse. It has aggressively advocated for holding right-leaning Americans in jail without due process.

How many liberals have been banned or shadow-banned on Facebook, Twitter, Google, and other social and digital media sites. Scores of conservatives have been so banned, including our former President.

How many times do we see the so-called "fact checks" on the social media posts of conservatives while never seeing them on the posts of liberals. These "fact checks" have covered such topics as COVID, climate change, gun rights, crime, and actions of protestors. The fact checks are dubious at best and downright dishonest at worst.

Financial platforms such as PayPal, Venmo, and GoFundMe routinely refuse service to or censor conservatives. In the past year alone, GoFundMe has taken down fund-raisers for Kyle Rittenhouse, conservative students at Arizona State University, and from the freedom trucker convoy after having raised \$9 million.

Finally, just this last week, we saw that YouTube and Facebook have censored Project Veritas in some of the most important investigative research that we have seen come out of a media company.

While all of this sounds like an impossibility to overcome, we must fight to end this bias. Through my assignments to the Judiciary Committee and the Select Committee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government, we will do exactly that.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her comments. I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ), the best Florida podcaster from the Sunshine State.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, does it feel sometimes like we are living in a crazy sci-fi movie where powerful entities and interests are trying to control what we see and what we hear and what we read? Because they ultimately want to dominate what we think and how we behave.

My fellow Americans, there is a broad effort underway to deplatform, demonetize, and destroy anyone who has a conservative America First perspective. We have seen this with "Newsmax," with "One America News." We saw Google work to demonetize "The Federalist" and my question is this: When did we become so frail as a country? When did we take the position that if we saw something we didn't agree with that somehow that would dehumanize us and limit our ability to participate in meaningful dialogue? I think we became that frail when the left started to say that words were violence, which they are not.

Speech is what liberates us from violence. It gives us an alternative path, but people get frustrated and concerned when they see that the choices that they want to make in telecommunications or the digital world are deemed unacceptable by the powers that be.

When did this realignment happen? I remember when I was in school, it was always the liberals, the classical liberals that wanted this robust marketplace of ideas, and it was a few conservatives who didn't want you to see certain things or look at certain things or read certain things. Now it has like totally flipped the script because they have such a low view of our fellow Americans.

So what are we going to do about it? The Energy and Commerce Committee should be holding hearings on this. The Department of Justice antitrust entities should be looking into whether or not this is too much of a concentration of power in entities like AT&T and DIRECTV that are stifling "Newsmax" and "One America News" and even Google's terrible work to try to demonetize "The Federalist."

I also believe that in the House Judiciary Committee we should ask these questions seriously and encourage the Department of Justice to take action.

By the way, if you are a shareholder out there in AT&T, I would encourage you to pursue a derivative suit. Why is it that some of these woketopians that sit on these boards in these senior leadership positions are devaluing the stock you own, limiting access to popular channels because they don't like the viewpoint? They don't like you, and they don't care about an America where the values that undergird the Constitution are more important than the terms of service that we see at Big Tech companies.

I thank my colleague, KEN BUCK, for having led on these issues for many years. There is much work ahead for the Biden administration, for Article III courts, and for this very Congress.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN).

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored that Congressman BUCK has asked me to be a speaker this evening as we defend the U.S. Constitution.

Our U.S. Constitution is under attack like never before. I am not talking about the Second Amendment, which, of course, is disliked by so many people on the other side of the aisle. I am not talking about the right to a speedy trial, as we see in Washington, D.C., itself, people spending months and months in jail without ending their ordeal there.

I am talking about the First Amendment. Throughout my life, the First Amendment is almost the amendment that would have been most unanimously agreed to. Nevertheless, in part, I assume, because of the popular culture and in part because of our educational system, we are in a situation in which the Pew Research Center found 76 percent of Democrats support tech companies censoring online.

Even more amazing, 65 percent of the Democrats support censorship by the government. How in the world did such a large, important party in this country it become apparently the accepted view of the First Amendment to be that it is obsolete?

Just last year, the then-chairman of the Intelligence Committee wrote to Meta, the parent company of Facebook, threatening congressional action if Facebook did not continue to censor conservative views and maintain bans on conservative figures, such as the former President. Can you imagine people in this body saying the way we are going to deal with political disagreements in the future is we are just going to censor one side?

That is what is going on here.

Their message is loud and clear: Get in line, or we are going to use the levers of government to silence you. It is a chilling message, reminiscent of the practice of communists in China or Russia or Cuba.

It surprises me what open criticisms of the government you can find in Russia. In China, the Communist Party exercises complete control over the internet, restricting what its citizens can search for. It is hard to believe people in this country want this country to become more like China.

It is not unfounded. You can even bleed into freedom of religion.

In Canada, recent court rulings have held LGBTQ rights trump an individual's right to freedom of religion. Freedom of speech should be a given. Liberal college students when I was in college used to pride themselves on defending free speech.

Look at Canada, censoring views that come from the Bible. In other words, censoring religion in Canada. That is what it is coming down to in our country.

I thank my friend from Colorado for giving me an opportunity to defend the Constitution, and I hope anybody back home listening to this educates their children and grandchildren. We do not have the government censoring free speech.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman's passion. I yield to the

gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. BURCHETT), the gentleman from the Butternut State. That is a new one for me.

Mr. BURCHETT. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is the Volunteer State. The Butternut State, I never heard that.

Dadgummit, Mr. Speaker, here I am again bringing attention to yet another example of our woke telecom companies targeting conservative speech. I am very glad though that they did not censor my good friend Mr. BUCK's new book "Crushed," which is actually on the best seller list, I have heard. I am fired up about that, brother.

DIRECTV, of course, is co-owned by AT&T and TPG, and they have taken "Newsmax" off the air as we have heard.

DIRECTV says this was purely a business decision, but nobody believes that, Mr. Speaker. Big media corporations don't exactly have the best record of protecting conservative speech.

Last year, Democrats in Congress wrote letters to AT&T and other telecom companies demanding they deplatform "Newsmax"—which is really just a fancy way of saying we are going to deny your First Amendment rights, Mr. Speaker—along with "Fox News" and "One America News" because of so-called disinformation.

After these letters were sent, DIRECTV dropped "One America News," and now it appears to be doing the same thing to "Newsmax."

This fits a disturbing pattern, Mr. Speaker, of these woke corporations using their market dominance to censor conservative networks to appease Washington politicians and further their demands on woketopia.

After receiving lots of criticism from the American people about this decision, DIRECTV announced it would launch a new conservative network. That is great, but it is still not an excuse for deplatforming another popular network, Mr. Speaker.

Our country was built on freedom of speech, and Americans benefit from having access to a wide range of viewpoints, not just the ones approved by the liberal Democrats.

Mr. Speaker, one day they will be coming after the liberal media, and then it will be too dadgum late.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, if the stenographer needs help with dadgummit, we will try to get a spelling for her on that.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Mrs. BOEBERT). She is from my home State, and she is a young person who has set this place on fire since she has been here.

Mrs. BOEBERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I have not literally lit this place on fire.

At midnight Tuesday, January 24, 2023, "Newsmax" was removed from DIRECTV, DIRECTV STREAM, and Universe, denying 13 million customers this highly rated news channel.

This is not the first time that we have seen this, and I am afraid that it won't be the last time that we are seeing this here in our great country. OAN was deplatformed by DIRECTV in April of 2022.

So what is next? FOX News? Will The Weather Channel be canceled next if they refuse to bow to the left's altar of climate change? What about The History Channel? We see on a regular basis the left wants to erase history and deny truth. How about TBN? There has definitely been an increase in disdain and intolerance by many liberals for Christian beliefs, simply by saying we love Jesus. So is TBN next?

Americans are tired of cancel culture. Conservatives are not being treated fairly. We are the ones who are censored by Big Tech. We are the ones targeted and called domestic terrorists when moms and dads show up at school board meetings.

We are the ones targeted by the IRS because our organizations have the word "patriot" in their name.

□ 1915

Mr. Speaker, if you are a conservative pastor, the government persecutes you. If you are a liberal pastor, Joe Biden shows up to your church, whether he realizes he is there or not.

Yet, now we are faced with Newsmax, a conservative news organization followed and watched, again, by millions of Americans, and it has been removed from DIRECTV. Newsmax is the fourth most watched news channel, but they have been removed for hyperpolitical reasons.

What can be done? I have been asked time and time again: What do we do to rein in the censorship and the oppression of conservatives because free and open speech is worth fighting for?

The First Amendment in our Constitution defends our freedom of speech. That is something that we will continue to pursue, to preserve, and to never let the left take away from us entirely. So, here is where we will start.

AT&T: As long as you continue to censor conservatives and attack the press, I will make it my personal mission to strip the wasteful, ridiculous Federal subsidies you receive.

To AT&T, DIRECTV, and all the woke corporations: This isn't a threat. It is absolutely a promise. If you continue to stifle free speech in this great country and muzzle the press corps, Congress will have no choice but to hold you accountable. I promise you that my colleagues and I are happy to take you on to preserve free speech for all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman BUCK for organizing this tonight. I thank the gentleman for being a defender of free speech from the censorship that is going on. I thank the gentleman for fighting against that.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman and wish her safe travels back to our great State.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BURLISON), who is a hunter, a fisherman, and a great American.

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Colorado (Mr. BUCK) for yielding.

I am from Missouri, the Show Me State, and the home of Harry Truman, who said: "Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear."

This sounds like a nation that we see with China or Russia. Sadly, it is something that could happen in the United States if we are not vigilant here.

The First Amendment is this country's foundation. The diverse and competitive marketplace of ideas is the heartbeat that keeps this Republic alive. People need to be able to debate and to be able to challenge one another.

Yes, free speech means that people have the right to sometimes be wrong. Yet, over the last few years, we in the United States have ceded power as a Federal Government to Big Tech and Big Tech entities. We have executives from San Francisco to New York who have crowned themselves the free speech police for the rest of our Nation.

When Elon Musk purchased Twitter last year, he took a great step in the right direction by allowing an independent journalist to review the company's records, and their findings are now what we call the Twitter files.

It has confirmed what conservatives nationwide already knew what was going on, that Big Tech and Big Government were working together with the left to silence conservative views and voices and to relegate them to being a second-class citizen.

In one instance, the reporter found that Twitter censored the Hunter Biden laptop scandal in the middle of the Presidential election. Bari Weiss revealed that Twitter was, indeed, silencing conservative voices and shadow banning individuals. Perhaps what was most disturbing was that the FBI gave Twitter a list of accounts to shut down.

It doesn't stop there. Last year the DHS, our own Federal Government, tried to set up its own disinformation board. We see entities and businesses that the Federal Government has given special privileges to provide over-the-air television, cable television, right-of-way to deliver entertainment to the homes of individuals across America. These companies choose to silence conservative speech by first deplatforming and eliminating One America News Network and now going after Newsmax.

There is a famous quote about what happened during the Holocaust when the Nazis first came for some individuals and people said nothing. Then, eventually, they will come for you.

I say this not as a Republican or a Missourian but as a concerned citizen for a country that has these rights that were here because of the blood that was shed by thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of patriots from the time of the American Revolution until today, who fought and died so that you and I would have free speech. We must fight all the attacks against the First Amendment and uphold the values that make this country so very special.

Mr. BUCK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks, and I thank all 18 of our speakers. All 18 felt so strongly that they came here during their evening and dedicated themselves to making sure that a message was heard in America, a message that we will not tolerate censorship in this country and that we will not tolerate the left. Whether it owns a corporation or whether it is colluding with the government, we will not tolerate the unacceptable behavior of taking news shows off just because they reflect a conservative viewpoint.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that many of the speakers today, many of the Members of Congress who spoke, made it absolutely clear that they are going to dedicate time, energy, and staff resources to make sure that we look into this further.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your patience and the patience of the staff here. I very much appreciate being able to speak directly to the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

MOST AMERICANS POORER TODAY THAN IN 2019

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Mr. Speaker, I hope that my friend from Georgia is enjoying the experience. In the old days when you were bad, we used to put you in the chair to have to cover Special Orders.

Would you believe I had to cover a lot of Special Orders as a freshman?

We are going to spend a couple of minutes tonight doing all sorts of things, Mr. Speaker, but one of the first things I want to walk through is: How many understand we are all poorer today than we were just a couple of years ago?

We have to stop this White House, my brothers and sisters on the left, and even others, talking about how wonderful the economy is and how well things are going. The fact of the matter is that for the vast majority of the population, you are poorer today than you were in 2019, except for a little bit of a quirk for some population in L.A.

To give you a sense, Jason Furman—you know that rightwing economist. That was sarcasm. Real wages are lower today than they were in Decem-

ber 2019 for every industry except retail trade and some leisure and hospitality. That is Jason Furman putting it out on social media because we have some updates today. This is off the Bloomberg Terminal from about 20 minutes ago.

One of the reasons I am also here is I represent Scottsdale-Phoenix, one of the greatest spots on Earth, particularly during the winter. Please come visit us.

My folks in the Scottsdale-Phoenix area, if you look at the index that has come out from BLS, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, their wages, they are 4.5 percent poorer today than they were just 1 year ago.

Don't tell me things are wonderful if you are a family struggling just to figure out how you cover your gas and groceries.

"Well, David, gas is down." The data is the data.

If you have had this type of wage growth but inflation in your area is dramatically higher than that, that gap is cruelty. That gap means you are poorer. That gap means your savings for your retirement is harder. That gap means taking care of your kids is more difficult.

When you go to the grocery store and are just trying to buy stuff for your family, somehow you seem to have a lot more—what is that old saying?—month than you do paycheck.

I am sure I just screwed up the colloquialism, but you know what I am saying, Mr. Speaker. This is our brothers and sisters out there.

Please, will this body start to give a damn about people trying to survive?

We chase shiny objects here all the time that get us on television and that make us look popular, or we can look outraged.

These are families in our neighborhood. I accept it is pages of math, but behind this math are people who are out there trying to survive.

Mr. Speaker, have you gone out and tried to buy eggs lately? I accept that is an outlier. But for the majority of our brothers and sisters in this country, you are poorer today than you were at the end of 2019, and in this, you are poorer today than you were 1 year ago.

I say to my brothers and sisters on the left that we have gone through this multiple times. We know you are not going to take responsibility, step up, and accept the responsibility for the crazy spending you pumped into the economy. Then, you created incentives not to participate in the labor force, detaching work from the morality of being there, and just also the good economics. Then, we wake up and people are poorer. Then you look at us saying: Well, we need to subsidize more.

We are looking at data on the Joint Economic Committee and Ways and Means Committee that some of this will cascade through us as a society for decades.

Mr. Speaker, we all grew up understanding the concept of the elegance of

compounding interest. I get a little bit today, but then I build on that and build on that. It is the same thing in your life. You build a skill, you get paid a little bit more, and then you build a skill.

What happens when you basically create a barrier to your participation in the labor market? You have lost that compounding of life. Now, we are seeing in some of the economic literature that our brothers and sisters are going to be poorer for the rest of their lives because of economic policies that set off inflation and then crushed other things such as productivity.

I am going to get to productivity in a moment.

This chart is very recent. We were just looking at some of the cost-of-living indexes, and you do this whole deflator calculation. I am trying harder to make the charts readable. Apparently, one of the complaints I get on YouTube all the time is: "Schweikert, I can't read your charts." I am trying.

Here is 2019. We were hitting this amazing spike in basically your wealth. The pandemic hit. This is where we spent a fortune subsidizing. This collapse here is your ability to buy things because your wages may have gone up, but they didn't go up as fast as inflation, meaning you are poorer. The dollars you have are less valuable.

Who is the beneficiary of this? Who benefited by you getting poorer? Here is the dirty little secret here in Washington, D.C. Borrowers. Borrowers benefit when your dollars become worth less.

Who is the biggest borrower? Seriously. Play with me for a moment. Who is the biggest borrower? Have you seen this thing called the debt clock? The United States Government is sitting around \$31.5 trillion.

□ 1930

Here is the great scam, and you are all party to it: The dollars we are going to pay back the national debt are less valuable. We stripped it from you. We stripped it from your savings. We stripped it from things you are going to have to buy in the future. We devalued you and your life and your savings, and we are going to pay back the debt in deflated dollars. Biggest wealth transfer in human history.

How many people have come behind this microphone and at least attempted to apologize for what we did to working people in this country?

That is why you are going to see some crazy calculations come out over the next few months of debt to GDP. It is because we devalued the dollars we are going to pay back the debt.

Now, you and I are going to—it is a technical economic term—get screwed. I am sorry for the folks who have to keep track of what I say.

The reality of it is, as in interest rates now, we pay higher interest rates because we have devalued the U.S. dollar functionally through inflation. You are devaluing your savings.